

# **Staying Connected**

## Update from Rep. Deb Wallace

### A note from Rep. Deb Wallace:

Dear neighbors,

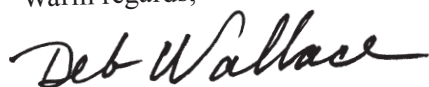
It seems we just finished the 2007 legislative session yesterday (it was actually April!) but already the 2008 legislative session is fast approaching. I've been very busy this summer in my Vancouver office meeting with constituents and preparing proposals for the upcoming session.

Thank you to all who have written, called or dropped by the office to share your thoughts and ideas. Your feedback really does make a difference.

In fact, in this newsletter, you'll see a few success stories that show how people in our community shared ideas that became the starting point for legislation and discussion. Democracy truly is a team sport and that's why one of my priorities this year has been to use technology and other new outreach tools that allow people to participate in policy discussions from the comfort of their home, office or school.

Again, thank you to those who have been in touch. And for others who haven't yet dropped me a line, please do. I love hearing from you!

Warm regards,



State Rep. Deb Wallace



Rep. Deb Wallace

17th Legislative District

**See  
inside  
for  
information  
on...**

- **New ways lawmakers are reaching out to the public**
- **Progress report for government efficiency and accountability**
- **And more...**

### How to reach me

My Vancouver office is the quickest way to get in touch. Please contact me to share the issues and concerns important to you and your family. I am able to represent you more effectively when you provide me with your thoughts and opinions.

#### **Vancouver Office:**

108 SE 124th Ave.

(360) 260-6110





Wallace.Deb@leg.wa.gov

**Toll-free Legislative Hotline:** (800) 562-6000

**TTY for hearing impaired:** (800) 635-9993

**You're Invited:  
Community  
Action Forum  
and  
Online Web  
Forum**

#### ***The Education Imbalance—Increasing Opportunities for All Students***

-  Help students learn and succeed  Cultivate a skilled workforce
-  Increase high school and college graduation rates
-  Prepare students to become active community members

#### **Community Action Forum**

**When:** October 25th from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

**Where:** Clark College, Penguin Union Bldg. Room 258

#### **Online Web Forum**

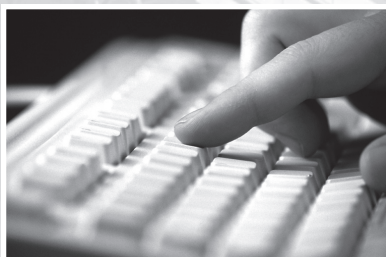
**When:** October 30th. Forum lasts all day and you can join the conversation at any time.

**Where:** Register at my website [www.housedemocrats.wa.gov/members/wallace](http://www.housedemocrats.wa.gov/members/wallace).

# *Representative* Deb Wallace • 17th District

## Turning democracy into a 21st century team sport

We should recognize and celebrate that technology is making it possible for people to communicate in all kinds of ways we never imagined.



Technology is linking more people to the political process than ever before and that's something to be excited about. This summer I hosted our Legislature's first ever "web dialogue," an online forum that drew more than 180 people from all around the state to discuss how we can improve our higher education system.

But online forums aren't the only new way of bringing more people into the process. This past year I held the first "virtual town hall" in the state. From Olympia, I led a three-way town hall that focused on higher education issues with students and faculty from WSU-Vancouver and Clark College. It was a valuable and fun way to see and talk with people from both campuses via live videoconferencing from Olympia.

## Community Action Forum – October 25

The discussion about improving higher education in our state is far from over. That's why on October 25th, I'm hosting a Community Action Forum here in Vancouver to continue our discussion about higher education and how we can educate more people to higher levels.

In particular, we'll discuss how to prevent students from dropping out of high school, how to increase access to college and other post-high school opportunities, and how to prepare a skilled workforce. I hope you'll join me in discussing solutions with experts from around the state and our community.

### *Did you know...*

- 25% of our children do not graduate high school?
- Only 16% of today's high school students go on to complete a college degree?
- In 2005, 51% of firms surveyed in Washington reported difficulty finding qualified job applicants?

## You can participate in the discussion online too!



*"...education stands as the gateway to the kind of society we will become."*

— Lee C. Bollinger, President, Columbia University

The Action Forum will coincide with an all day "web dialogue" on October 30 so we can continue to engage as many people as possible in the discussion. It's a fun, easy way to join us from your home, school or office. Go

to my website at [www.housedemocrats.wa.gov/members/wallace](http://www.housedemocrats.wa.gov/members/wallace) to register. You can join the conversation at any time.



*Rep. Wallace talks to students about the importance of education.*





## Accountability measures really pay off

When I first ran for the Legislature in 2002, one of my top priorities was ensuring and promoting government accountability. After five years as a state representative, much of my

work continues to focus on making sure every tax dollar is spent wisely and efficiently.

That is why I've been honored to serve on the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee, or JLARC. This committee's job is to make state government more effective, efficient and accountable. We do this by conducting numerous performance audits and studies every year. These audits provide legislators and the public with information and data about how effectively our state agencies and programs are run.

JLARC releases an annual update report that provides a snapshot of results from performance audits requested by the Legislature and an update on how agencies are using audit information to improve the way they do business.

The most current report shows specific examples of how these accountability measures are paying off. For example, JLARC recently identified concerns with how the state was being charged for the use of helicopters to fight forest fires. A simple fix resulted in \$1 million being transferred back into our state's General Fund.

If you want to learn more or view some of the committee's reports for yourself, go online at [www.leg.wa.gov/JLARC](http://www.leg.wa.gov/JLARC).

You can also be involved in making government more efficient and effective. Contact the state Auditor's office to share your ideas for improving efficiency or to report waste, fraud or abuse of government resources. Their office has a special toll-free hotline at 1-866-902-3900 and a web form at [www.sao.wa.gov](http://www.sao.wa.gov).

## Audits work – the proof is in the numbers

Since 1990, JLARC has helped state agencies find ways to save hundreds of millions of dollars. JLARC estimates that their recommendations have resulted in \$466 million in one-time savings and \$86 million in ongoing yearly savings.\*

\*Note: All estimates in Year 2006 dollars

## Local student highlights need to close technology gap in state schools

Remember when you were in school and asked to present a book report or science project to your classmates? Chances are, you went to the library, flipped through the card catalog, wrote your notes using a paper and pencil, and maybe even put together a poster or clay model.

Today, students are much more likely to search the internet for information, prepare a typed report on a computer, and put together a PowerPoint presentation or spreadsheet.

But for students who don't have easy access to a computer or the Internet, such projects are a stressful reminder that a "digital divide" is making it harder for many to keep up with their classmates.

And that issue is one that hits close to home. In a recent survey, our local Evergreen School District found that between 12-23 percent of local middle school students do not have internet access at home.



This issue was brought to my attention by an Evergreen High School student leader who does not have internet access at home and has decided to take action by researching and

proposing a solution through her senior class project.

The fact is, this "digital divide" is a very real barrier that can prevent skilled, talented students from reaching their full potential. Long-term, it could affect their ability to find a good job and be a fully-engaged participant in their community.

One of my priorities as we move towards the 2008 session is to work with this student and others to ensure that all students have access to the best tools possible to succeed in school.



Vancouver office: 108 SE 124th Ave.

**Mark Your Calendar!**

**Community Action Forum**  
The Education Imbalance—  
Increasing Opportunities  
for All Students  
**October 25th at 7 p.m.**

**Online Web Forum**  
Be one of the first to  
participate in an innovative  
online dialogue  
about education.  
**October 30th**

See inside for details!

**Representative Deb Wallace**  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
WA STATE DEPT  
OF PRINTING 98501